



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **THE CHILDREN'S READING CENTER, INC. CELEBRATES \$1,675,500 FUNDING FROM USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

PALATKA, FL, October 6, 2004 — While Putnam County schools are already in full swing this academic year, The Children's Reading Center charter school is looking toward the future. That's when "back to school" will take on a different meaning for the charter school approved by the Putnam County School Board in January 2003. With \$1,675,500 in financial assistance from USDA Rural Development, The Children's Reading Center, currently operating in leased space from St. Marks Episcopal Church, will build its own facilities.

On hand to celebrate today's ceremonial check presentation were city and county officials, the Children's Reading Center, Inc. Board of Directors, representatives from the Putnam County School Board and the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, as well as students, parents and members of the community. The Children's Reading Center serves a primarily rural population, providing educational opportunities for young students experiencing reading difficulties.

The new facility, estimated to cost \$2,075,500, is being funded through the USDA Rural Development Community Facility Loan and Grant Program, with a loan of \$1,525,500 and a grant of \$150,000. The school is providing a \$400,000 contribution toward the project. "The Children's Reading Center is a collaborative effort between the school, the county and the community that demonstrates leadership and vision," said Charles W. Clemons, Sr., USDA Rural Development State Director. "Rural Development is proud to be a part of this innovative state-of-the-art facility that will make a positive and ongoing difference to families in Putnam County."

The new 30,000 square foot facility will serve 240 students in grades K – 5 and will feature 12 classrooms, a media center, and a multi-purpose training room. Two separate restrooms and support areas will be constructed in two adjacent pre-engineered metal buildings. Site development includes parking and access drives, a bus drop-off area, play fields, storm water retention basins, and an area for a Phase 3 expansion in the future.

USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities and is the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers financial and technical assistance through Rural Housing Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Programs and Rural Utilities Programs. Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/fl>

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